

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NEVADA

STATE

Date Entered DEC 14 1978

Name

Location

Las Vegas Springs

Las Vegas
Clark County

Also Notified

Honorable Howard W. Cannon
Honorable Paul Laxalt
Honorable James D. Santini

COPY OF CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	NOV 2 1976
DATE ENTERED	DEC 14 1978

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Las Vegas Springs

AND/OR COMMON

or Big Springs, or Spring Rancho

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Las Vegas Valley Water District

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN 3700 West Charleston Boulevard

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Las Vegas

VICINITY OF

Nevada

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Nevada

32

Clark

003

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Water supply

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Las Vegas Valley Water District

STREET & NUMBER

3700 West Charleston Boulevard

CITY, TOWN

Las Vegas

VICINITY OF

STATE

Nevada

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Clark County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

200 East Carson Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Las Vegas

STATE

Nevada

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☒ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Originally, there were three running springs, feeding two large pools which formed the source of Las Vegas Creek. Early travelers reported the presence of large Fremont cottonwoods, mesquite and other desert shrubs in profusion.

The prehistoric area includes the archaeological site [REDACTED], excavated in 1972 by a group of archaeologists from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The area has been heavily disturbed by earth removal. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

In the 1860's, the site was developed as a ranch. Known as Spring Ranch it produced hay, grain and cattle. Then, there were ditches leading the waters to irrigate fields; those ditches are not now discernible.

When the Las Vegas townsite was laid out in 1905, these springs supplied water for both the town and railroad. Then, for the first time, water was pumped from the springs, pipe lines laid and reservoirs constructed. Wells were drilled as the water table dropped and the surface water receded.

Today much of the spring area remains in a natural state. Cottonwoods and native growth lines the old creek beds, but the beds are dry. There are no surface springs. A few old well derricks and well houses still stand, but a considerable portion of the site is open, natural terrain. The entire area is protected by a chain-link fence with barbed wire at the top.

The site is within an urban area with an expressway bordering on the north and a through road on the west. Residential property and a shopping center characterize uses of adjoining lands.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION	Spanish Trail: Water source for Mormon occupation.		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

N/A

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Until recently, Big Springs supplied the water for all human occupation Las Vegas Valley:

Basketmaker ?
 Pueblo, Paiute
 Government exploring expedition, 1844
 Spanish trading caravans (Spanish Trail)
 Mormon mining, colonization and missionary expeditions (Mormon Trail)
 Mormon Fort
 Historic ranches
 Railroad division point
 Las Vegas townsite

- 500 A.D. Basketmaker Peoples - Recent excavations* give tentative evidence that the basketmaker people used the site.
- 500 - 1150± Pueblo - The same archaeological survey* revealed that the spring site was a major outlying camp for the Pueblos who they inhabited Moapa Valley 50± miles to the east.
- 1200 - 1850± Paiute - Pottery and tool remains indicate the Southern Paiutes occupied the spring site on a temporary basis over a long period.
- 1830 - 1848 Spanish Trading Caravans (Spanish Trail) - A pack mule commercial trail was broken between Santa Fe, New Mexico and Los Angeles, California, about 1830. It was reported that Father Escalante roughly followed this route in 1776. Jedediah Smith in his fur seeking expedition of 1827, followed a portion of the Old Spanish Foot Trail from the mouth of the Virgin River westward. Antonio Armigo in 1829-1830 led the first commercial caravan during this period. The trail was known to renegades and brigands and used as a route for driving stolen horses eastward. The Mexican War ended the Spanish use of the trail in 1848. It then became known as the Mormon Trail with a branch which led to Salt Lake City.

*Archaeological Reconnaissance at Big Springs, Claude N. Warren, Ph.D. et al., University of Nevada-Las Vegas-1972.

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8. Significance (Continued)

1844 Government Exploring Expedition - John C. Fremont stopped at the springs during his second expedition during May of 1844 on his return from California.

1851 A way station was established in the spring of 1851 on the mail route between northern Utah and San Bernardino.

1855 Mormon Mining, Colonization, and Missionary Expeditions
In 1855, Brigham Young dispatched an expedition of Mormon missionaries to colonize a settlement in the valley and conduct mission work among the Indians. A small adobe village was built and fortified by a wall three miles below the springs. Corrals were made, housing provided and a post office established. Crops were planted adjacent to Las Vegas Creek. Lead mining was undertaken at Potosi in the nearby mountains to the southwest.

William Bringham led this Mormon colonization, which only lasted three years, then was recalled to Salt Lake City.

1861 Fort Baker - In 1861, three years after abandonment by the missionaries, the Army named the adobe building site "Fort Baker" in anticipation of stationing troops there. No troops, however, were ever garrisoned at this "fort."

Late 1860's - Historic Ranches - In the late 1860's the abandoned colony site was operated as a ranch. Octavius D. Gass acquired the colony site (800+ acres) and maintained a ranch (Las Vegas Rancho) until 1882, when he sold to Archibald Stewart. Stewart was killed in 1883 and his widow, Helen J. Stewart, operated the ranch until 1903, then sold 1,864 acres to William Clark's San Pedro-Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railroad Company. For years this ranch was operated by Helen J. Stewart and served as the only rest stop for travelers passing through the valley.

1904 A Railroad Division Point - In mid-October 1904, Utah Construction Company gangs completed rail construction to Las Vegas, thus giving Las Vegas a rail connection to the east.

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8. Significance (Continued)

1905 to present Las Vegas Townsite - An auction of surveyed properties held on May 15 & 16, 1905. This is considered the beginning of present day Las Vegas. A tent city sprang into being followed by buildings of more permanent nature. Clark County was created in 1909 and Las Vegas became county seat. Construction of Hoover Dam in the 1930's gave real impetus to Las Vegas' growth. Additional growth was created by the Basic Magnesium plant in the 1940's a wartime measure followed by expansion of gaming in the 1950's and 1960's. Las Vegas continues to grow.

A recent 1972 archaeological reconnaissance at Big Springs was conducted by Dr. Claude N. Warren at the behest of the Las Vegas Water District. A number of sites were uncovered, the preliminary results of which, according to Dr. Warren, "provide us with a new dimension to our view of the Pueblo culture in Southern Nevada. It is the first clear documentation of Pueblo occupation in the Las Vegas Valley and provides us with the indication of the kinds of activities undertaken by the Pueblo peoples in the valley." Dr. Warren stresses that his interpretations must be considered tentative until more information is obtained, especially regarding the earliest remains recovered. These incomplete remains date to a period just prior to the Pueblo occupation -- about 500 A.D. or earlier.

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9. Major Bibliographical References (Continued)

Warren, Dr. Claude, Ph. D. et al., University of Nevada-Las Vegas-1972,
report to Las Vegas Water District: Archaeological Reconnaissance at
Big Springs.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Fremont (ibid)

Hafen, L.R., Old Spanish Trail, Glendale: A. H. Clark, 1954.

Leavitt, Francis H., The Influence of the Mormon People in the Settlement of Clark County. Unpubl. M. A. Thesis. Reno, University of Nevada, 1954.

Nevada State Historical Society Papers, Vol. 5, 1925/26. Reno, Nevada

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 34±

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,1 6,6,3 4,9,0 4,0 0,4 7,0,0
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C 1,1 6,6,3 3,4,0 4,0 0,4 6,0,0

B 1,1 6,6,3 4,6,0 4,0 0,4 6,2,0
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D 1,1 6,6,3 2,4,0 4,0 0,4 6,4,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The 2123 foot north line is bounded by the southern right-of-way line of the Las Vegas Expressway (formerly West Fremont Street). The west line is nearly parallel to Valley View Road, but set back some 600 feet therefrom. The southerly line meanders in a nondescript fashion across Water District property to avoid a well and a reservoir, returning to the northeast corner on the Las Vegas Expressway at an acute angle. Each angle of the boundary is marked by an iron pin.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Wilbur E. Wieprecht, Historic Preservation Specialist

ORGANIZATION

Nevada State Park System

DATE

September 2, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

201 South Fall Street

TELEPHONE

(702) 885-4370

CITY OR TOWN

Carson City (Capitol Complex)

STATE

Nevada 89710

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE XX

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 10.2.3.76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

12/14/78

DATE 12/14/78

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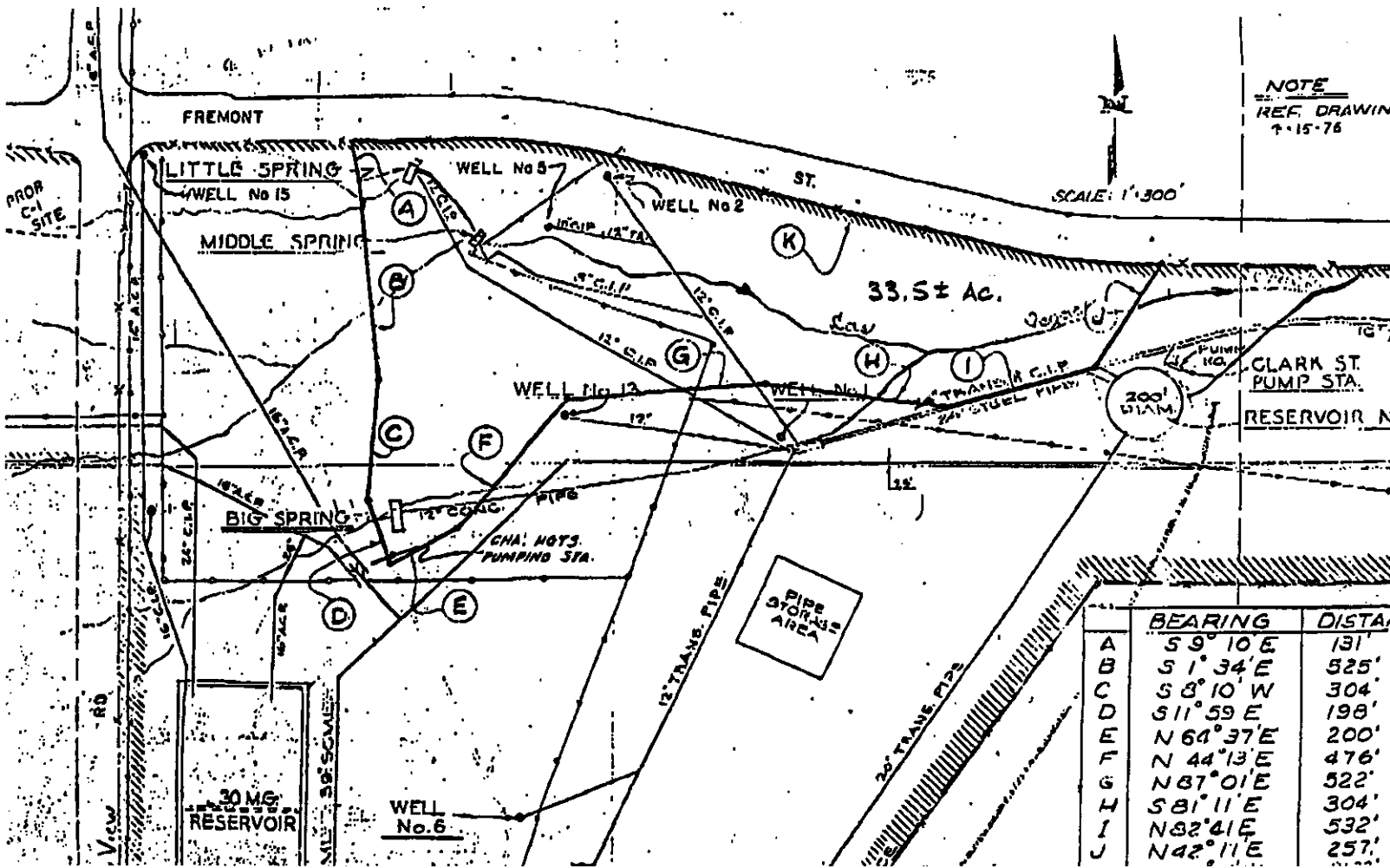
PAGE

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10. Geographical Data (Continued)

UTM References (Continued)

E. 11/663050 - 4004620
F. 11/662960 - 4004500
G. 11/662860 - 4004440
H. 11/662860 - 4004480
~~I. 11/662840 - 4004740~~
J. 11/662820 - 4004810
K. 11/663000 - 4004800



NOTE
REF. DRAWING
7-15-76

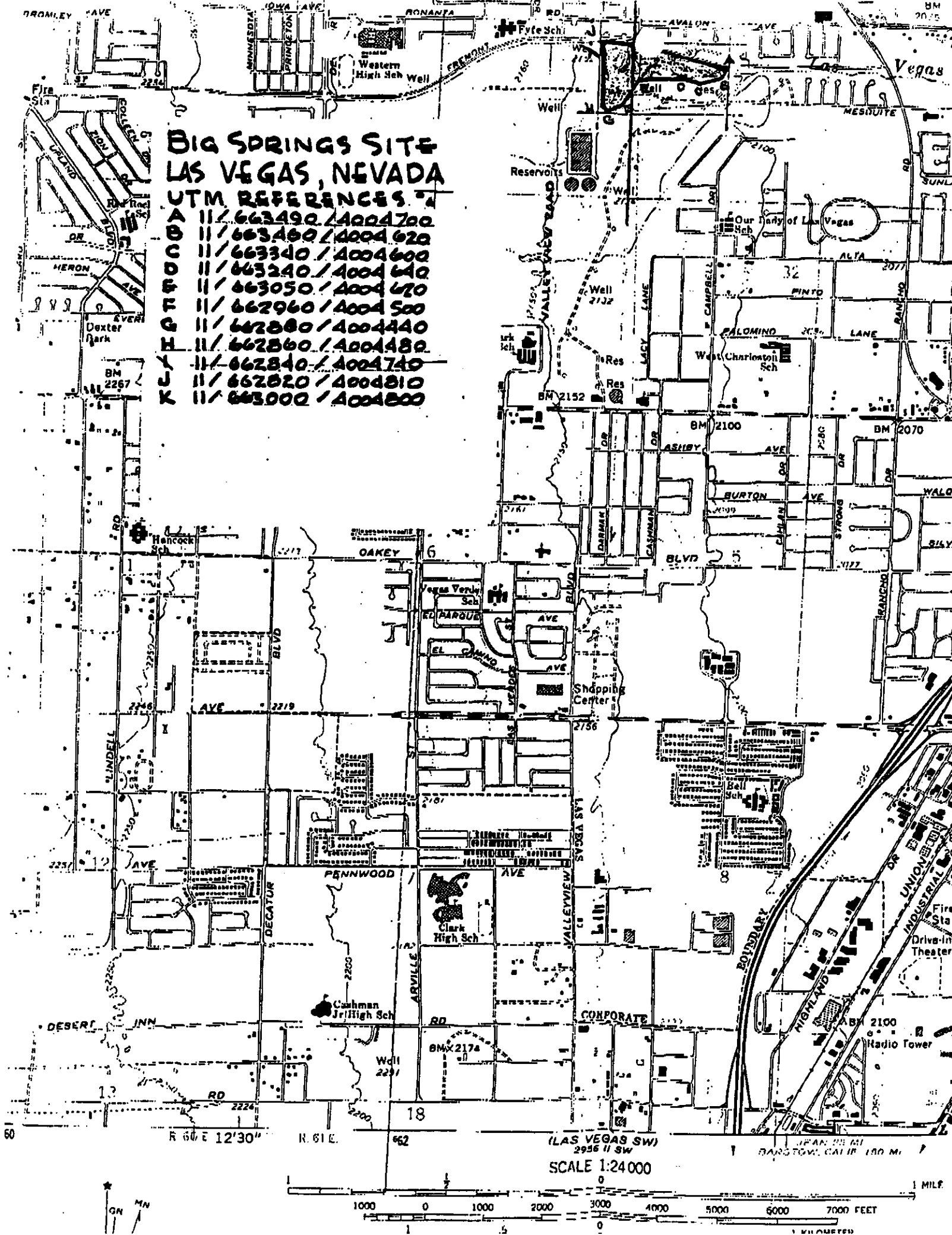
SCALE: 1"=300'

	BEARING	DIST.
A	S 9° 10' E	131'
B	S 1° 34' E	525'
C	S 3° 10' W	304'
D	S 11° 59' E	198'
E	N 64° 37' E	200'
F	N 44° 13' E	476'
G	N 87° 01' E	522'
H	S 81° 11' E	304'
I	N 82° 41' E	532'
J	N 42° 11' E	257'

BIG SPRINGS SITE LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

UTM REFERENCES

A	11	663490	4004700
B	11	663460	4004620
C	11	663340	4004600
D	11	663240	4004640
E	11	663050	4004670
F	11	662960	4004500
G	11	662880	4004440
H	11	662860	4004480
I	11	662840	4004740
J	11	662820	4004810
K	11	663000	4004800



(LAS VEGAS SW)
2956 11 SW

SCALE 1:24000

0 1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET

1 KILOMETER

1 MILE